

ECHOES and REFLECTIONS

Leaders in Holocaust Education

March 2014

Recommendations for Effective Holocaust Instruction

Suggestions for effectively teaching about the Holocaust are outlined throughout *Echoes and Reflections*. They are intended to help teachers consider the complexities of teaching topics associated with the Holocaust and to deliver accurate and sensitive instruction.

Below is a sampling of recommendations for addressing Holocaust education themes with links to materials in each of the ten lessons in *Echoes and Reflections*.

Individualize the history of the Holocaust by translating statistics into personal stories; use survivor and witness testimony whenever possible.

Using Lesson 1: Survivor and witness testimonies communicate the crucial role of the individual's experiences and stories and put a human face to history. In **Lesson 1: Studying the Holocaust**, students are introduced to the medium of visual history testimony when they meet [Kurt Messerschmidt](#) and listen to his experiences during the *Kristallnacht Pogrom*. Many students will be unfamiliar with the medium of visual history testimony and will react to the visual history testimony in very different ways. Allow sufficient time for students to process both the content and message in the clip of testimony and share their thoughts with others.

Using Lesson 4: What do students learn from reading diary entries and listening to testimonies that is different from what they learn from a textbook? Provide your students with a variety of accounts of life in the Lodz ghetto from **Lesson 4: The Ghettos** by distributing excerpts from the [Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak](#) and showing [Ellis Lewin's](#) and [Eva Safferman's](#) testimonies.

Our Recommendations:

Lessons 1, 4, and 5:

Individualize the history of the Holocaust by translating statistics into personal stories; use survivor and witness testimony whenever possible.

Lessons 2 and 3:

Contextualize the history of the Holocaust by helping students understand what happened before and after specific events.

Lessons 6, 7, and 8:

Challenge students to understand people and their decisions, attitudes, and actions in historical context.

Lessons 9 and 10:

Make the Holocaust relevant by connecting what students are learning to contemporary events.

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Using Lesson 5: In **Lesson 5: The "Final Solution"** [Ellis Lewin](#) and [Abraham Bomba](#) describe their arrival at Auschwitz and Treblinka. Later in the lesson, [Itka Zygmuntowicz](#) recites a poem that she wrote in Auschwitz, describing her longing for freedom. Ask students to write about something that has helped them overcome an obstacle during a difficult time.

- [Watch clips of testimony](#) from *Echoes and Reflections* online.

Contextualize the history of the Holocaust by helping students understand what happened before and after specific events.

Using Lesson 2: [Antisemitism](#) was entrenched in Germany and other European countries and Jews had been victims of widespread hatred and suspicion for centuries. In **Lesson 2: Antisemitism** students study the roots of antisemitism in order to better understand the historical context of racial ideology in Nazi Germany. Examine the variety of Nazi [propaganda images](#) in this lesson and discuss the effects that such images may have had on those who saw them.

Using Lesson 3: In **Lesson 3: Nazi Germany** students learn about the Weimar Republic and the rise of Nazi Germany. Help students consider the context for anti-Jewish policy and the *Kristallnacht Pogrom*. Using the [Pyramid of Hate](#), discuss how prejudiced attitudes might, if left unchecked, eventually lead to violence.

Challenge students to understand people and their decisions, attitudes, and actions in historical context.

Using Lesson 6: During the Holocaust, resistance was an action that required great courage and physical strength. **Lesson 6: Jewish Resistance** provides an opportunity for students to learn about various types of resistance. Listening to [Roman Kent](#) and [Helen Fagin](#) helps students understand what is meant by spiritual and cultural resistance during the Holocaust; testimony from [Mira Shelub](#) and [Sol Liber](#) provides students with a more nuanced understanding of armed resistance.

Using Lesson 7: People like the ones students learn about in **Lesson 7: Rescuers and Non-Jewish Resistance** were the exception rather than the rule. During the Holocaust, rescuers and aid providers took significant risks to help others. Share testimony from [Arie Van Mansum](#) and [Leslie Banos](#), and distribute [Yad Vashem Criteria](#) for awarding the honor of "Righteous Among the Nations." After studying the document, ask students if they are surprised by the number of people who have been honored. Provide time for them to discuss the following question: "*Why do you think most people remained bystanders?*"

Using Lesson 8: Harry Herder, Jr. helped liberate Buchenwald in April 1945. Distribute [A Liberator's Thoughts](#) in **Lesson 8: Survivors and Liberators**, and discuss this selection in a large group. This liberator reflects on his German heritage and wonders

You

New training programs have been added! [Sign up for a no-cost program near you.](#)

Invitation to Attend the 9th Annual International Conference on Holocaust Education at Yad Vashem

[Through Our Own Lens: Reflecting on the Holocaust from Generation to Generation](#)

July 7-10, 2014

The following new [iWitness](#) activities can be used as extensions to *Echoes and Reflections* lessons:

1936 Olympics: Race, Politics & Civil Rights

In this Video Editing Activity, students examine how racism played a role during the 1936 Berlin Olympics through the perspectives of African-American Olympian, Jesse Owens, and Jewish athletes such as Margaret Lambert. ([Lesson 3: Nazi Germany](#))

Fighting in the Face of Racism

In this Information Quest Activity, students engage with the testimony of two former American soldiers who helped liberate Jews during the Holocaust and who themselves

what choices he would have had if he was a German citizen during World War II. Ask students, *"What role does Harry like to believe his upbringing would have played in his choices?"*

Make the Holocaust relevant by connecting what students are learning to contemporary events.

Using Lesson 9: An examination and discussion of the artwork in **Lesson 9: Perpetrators, Collaborators, and Bystanders** reveal connections with the experiences of other refugee groups. Distribute [The Refugee](#) by artist Felix Nussbaum. Ask students if this painting might have meaning for present-day refugees, and if so, how.

Using Lesson 10: The Holocaust is one of history's most extreme human events with both unique and universal aspects. Students should first study the unique historical event of the Holocaust and then proceed to draw universal conclusions using the discussion questions and visual history testimony in **Lesson 10: The Children** as a guide.

Additional guidelines for planning and implementing an effective Holocaust education unit can be found in the introduction to the Teacher's Resource Guide and in each lesson.

experienced racism/prejudice in the United States before and after World War II.
(Lesson 8: Survivors and Liberators)

Share Strategies with Colleagues

Share experiences and strategies for teaching about the Holocaust on [FACEBOOK](#) and [TWITTER](#).

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